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REMODELING THE COMMONPLACE HOME.—III.

THE LIBRARY.

By EDWARD LEE YOUNG, ARCHITECT.



HERE are many people whose busy lives have debarred them from the knowledge of books, yet whose truthful natures resent the implied suggestion that a well-selected (to order) library gives of having read them, and, going to the other extreme, when building a house leave out or change the name of a room that would otherwise become a library, to a sitting or living-room, or perhaps a back

parlor. This fear of creating a false impression, or the dread of an explanation, or whatever it is that prevents the accumulation of good books and the formation of a library, is wrong in the sense that no man has lived his life until death has completed it, for during that period of existence there often comes a time of enforced inaction, when a series of books may awaken and foster the desire for knowledge, opening a new line of untried yet enduring pleasure, making the acquaintance of authors whose friendship is well worth having.

It is often said that there is nothing in life yielding greater satisfaction than that of intellectual development.

Through this development a library is formed, and every book is valued as a friend.

To many a library is but the name of a room, necessary to them because others have such a room, and the contents of the two or three book-cases in no way indicate the owner's taste or preferences.

A library should be a quiet place, where harmonious colors "tone into" rather than contrast with each other. Yet, as I recall the various libraries that I have remodeled or decorated, there are times when some of the books seem to speak—"shout" would be the more appropriate word. There is no doubt but that almost every book is bound to suggest in some way the contents of the book. The bright reds and yellows and the flaming titles speak the message that their authors would have them, before they are opened. Some of these books do not fall into the modern scheme of decorating on account of their obsolete colors, and the best that can be done with such offenders is to put them behind glazed doors, trusting that the reflecting surface of the glass will in a measure harmonize the color of the book by somewhat obscuring it.

In the March number of *THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER* the remodeling of the drawing-room was discussed and illustrated. You will remember the mention of the library or back parlor door opening. In sketch No. 1 you will see the old library in all its familiar commonplaceness, and we are looking at the door-opening that is mentioned in last month's article.

I do not feel the necessity of describing the rest of this room, for, with this sketch as a key, everyone familiar with the New York house knows the rest of the room.

In sketch No. 2 the same room is shown remodeled, and in describing this room I would call attention to the value of using every space to the utmost.

The chimney breast does not show in sketch No. 2, for the space has been used for bookcases and closets. The decorative cornice runs straight across the room, and the panel under the frieze of the cornice, in the extreme corner, is a secret closet, the door of which is

covered with a tapestry. Under this secret closet there is an interesting corner made by having the lower bookcase cornice which connects the wing case concave, under which is a shelf. Now this swell bookcase that shows underneath (the top of which forms the shelf) is not a plain, stationary shelf bookcase, but it is intended for a revolving stand for "Britannica" or some other encyclopædia, thus using a space ordinarily difficult to fill, and of little value to anyone.

The bookcases, one above another, each side of the mantel, and the wing case finishing at the door trim, are very little different from other cases, except, perhaps, they are not too deep, a common but irritating fault.

Now as to the general color effect and treatment of the library. The wood used is mahogany, treated with a



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potash bath to burn it to a brown tone; the cornice of plaster treated with red gold and glazed over with reddish asphaltum, and toned down to the same value as the mahogany; the ceiling covered with aluminum leaf and glazed with a red gold lacquer. The spaces between the pilasters filled in with tapestry, a parquet floor and a rug of the same mahogany values. The fireplace facing of a red Numidian marble, nitrated at the corners, produces a rich and effective finish to the fire opening.

The style of the design of this new room is Italian Renaissance, furniture for which may be found in the shops, and the covering should be either a tapestry or plain mahogany colors, velour, velvet or mohair plush.

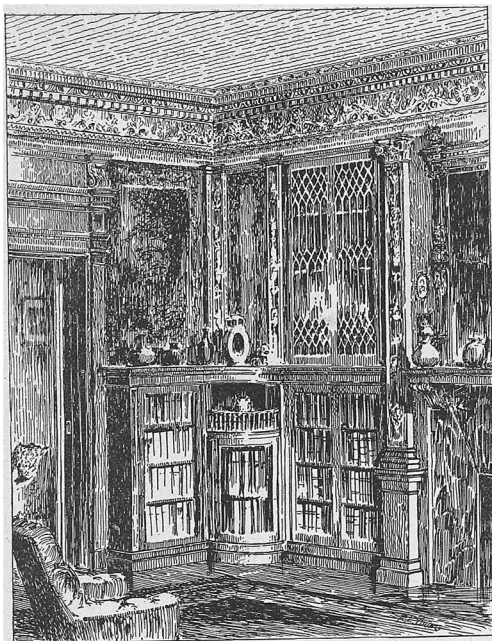
The value of this alteration is not so much in the design of the work, as it is in the economical use of the space. Therefore, should it be desirable to produce a result for less money than this room cost, it could be done in several different ways.

The cornice and frieze could be left out, and a deep cove, either plain or decorated, starting from the line above where the pilasters finish, and die out in the ceiling.

There are so many ways of designing a room that some effort is necessary to find a good reason for the use of certain forms and styles. The effort is a strained one often, at other times a mere fancy.

As the woodwork of a library treated in an architectural way produces the most dignified effect, those styles that are known to lend themselves to architectural treatment are appropriate for a library. I think that we might safely say that this is the rule. The styles such as Louis XV. and Rococo, which are decorative to the last degree, would not be in anyway suitable for a library. Yet they have been, and will be used again. The great fault of these styles is in their movement, the absence of repose so essential in a room of this kind, for the one important consideration for a perfect library is dignity, and with it comes repose, the absence of anything to attract the eye from concentrated thought and action.

The continuous work of THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER and other magazines as educators, and the consid-



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erate kindness of the reading public has given to these readers a knowledge of decoration among the laymen that did not exist ten years ago. This means much to the professed decorator, at the same time, as the artist is bound to keep in the lead.

There is always, and probably always will be, a very good reason to call in professional service where work of any moment is contemplated, for "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," in decorative effects as well as anything else.

THE SEASON'S NOVELTIES.

By ELLEN DREW.

THE new importations of wall papers are beginning to come in, and the predominating spring styles are light and airy in general character and coloring, with a strong tendency to striped effects. These are a direct reproduction of Louis XVI. styles, and consist of a narrow stripe of some color—blue, pink, green or yellow—on a white ground, with a floral ornament of graceful trailing sprays of small flowers that correspond in color with the prevailing tint of the stripes. The English papers of this pattern range in price from \$2.50 to \$3.50 per roll. But the domestic paper may be had for almost any price.

In deference to the prevailing fad for old blue, some excellent designs are shown, either blue on a white ground, or *vice versa*. These are of various shades, from the dark, low tones of the old Dutch tile, called "Delft," to the delicate pale tints called "Dresden." The designs are also diversified, and some are straggling vines, others scrolls, and still others are of some bold geometrical pattern. They are usually rather quaint.

One all-over design of the popular hawthorn blossoms, with its white and pale pink flowers, is especially dainty and refreshing, the strength of the design coming from its brown branches and thorns. Another charming design of similar character was a graceful arrangement of the lilac, bush, flowers and leaves. It was exceedingly artistic.

One paper, pink, resembled very closely draperies of silk, when in place giving the impression of pink silk hanging in full folds from frieze to surbase. In appearance it possessed the lustre of silk, and had what is called a "silk finish." Price per roll, \$2.50.

Another entirely different wall covering, and just being introduced, is a printed canvas. The design is printed, usually of some dark, low tone of color, on a drab canvas, and it is printed with flock and is very rich in texture. No price can be given, as separate estimates have to be given according to the requirements and dimensions of the room. The weave of the canvas is altogether in evidence, as it is by no means covered by the design, which in the few samples shown were geometrical figures at irregular intervals.

A new fabric for furniture upholstery, draperies, portières and wall coverings is the Morris velvet. New designs (by Morris) just imported show a large variety of colors and styles. The plain colors are deep red, olive, blue, tan, green, bronze, and others, all dark, rich tones. The designs of graceful scrolls or bold floral patterns on these are a different shade of same color. Others, again, show delightful combinations of two and even three colors. They are of the texture of heavy velvet, and drape gracefully, and altogether are very attractive. They are thirty inches wide, and average \$2 a yard. This is not high priced, considering they are of beautiful quality and all hand-printed.

There are very pretty goods in all cotton, with the Louis XVI. stripes, at \$1.40 per yard, and still another fabric—jute—presenting same effects, for seventy-five cents.

The American stripes are new and quite stylish; so, also, are the Moorish designs and Arab tapestries. These are of somewhat coarse material. Cotton, with plenty of color of deep, dull hues, very striking in effect, and being serviceable, will appeal to slim purses. They range in price from ninety cents to \$1.60 per yard. They are well adapted for smoking-rooms, studios, offices and "dens."